

## IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

### A. LAND USE AND PUBLIC POLICY

This section describes existing land uses within the North Park Street Regulating Code area and its vicinity, summarizes relevant plans and policies, and evaluates the compatibility of the North Park Street Code with these uses and policies.

#### 1. SETTING

##### a. Background

The North Park Street Code is designed to facilitate redevelopment and reinvestment within the North Park Street Code area, while preserving the attributes that make the area special, such as a rich architectural and industrial heritage, a vital mix of retail, commercial, and residential uses, and its historic role as an important commercial gateway to the City of Alameda.

##### b. North Park Street Area Location

The North Park Street Regulating Code area is comprised of approximately 17 blocks within the eastern portion of the City of Alameda generally bounded by Oakland Estuary to the north, Oak Street to the west, Lincoln Avenue to the south and Tilden Way to the east.

##### c. Existing Land Uses within the North Park Street Code Area

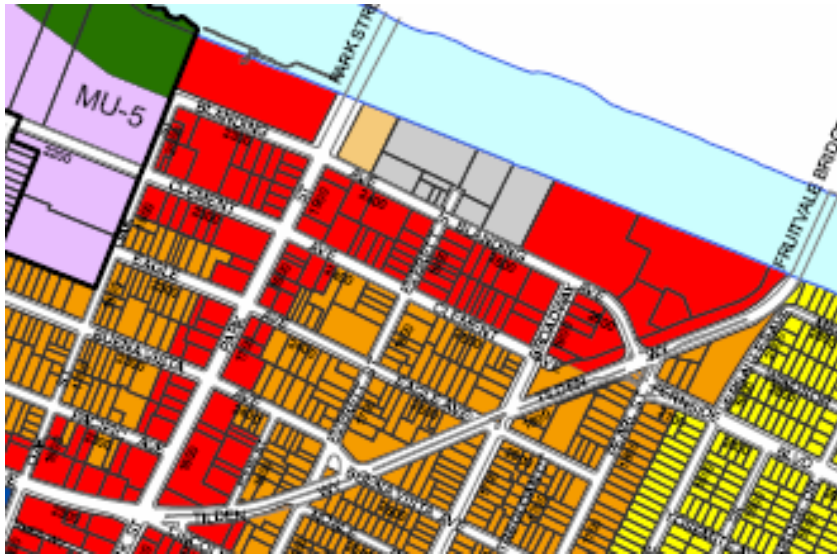
The North Park Street Code area's existing General Plan land use designations are shown in **Figure IV.A-1**. The existing uses fit generally within seven use categories: Residential, General Industry, Commercial, Public/Institutional, Commercial Recreation/Marina, Parks and Public Open Space, and Vacant/Undeveloped Land. The proposed General Plan Land Use Diagram Amendment is shown in **Figure IV.A-2**.

The dominant land uses in the North Park Street Code area are auto oriented commercial uses, residential uses, other retail and services, office use, and some light industrial uses. The commercial uses are predominately located on Park Street, but they also occur on certain parcels on Clement and Blanding Street. Since the mid-2000's, all of the new car auto dealers have left Park Street. Some used car dealerships continue to occupy some of the Park Street parcels and a number of automobile service businesses occupy Park Street, Blanding Street, and Clement Street parcels.

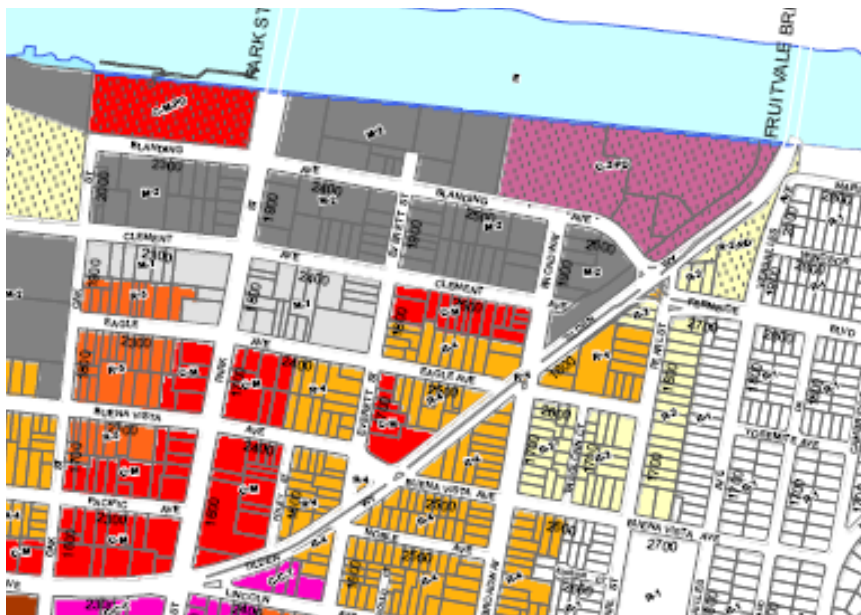
The rest of the plan area is dominated by a mix of residential and small business uses. Parcels facing onto Pacific, Buena Vista, and Eagle are occupied by a large number of residential structures, many of which are occupied by small business and office uses.

The Estuary's shoreline is almost entirely urbanized with industrial and commercial uses, marinas and a few residential uses.

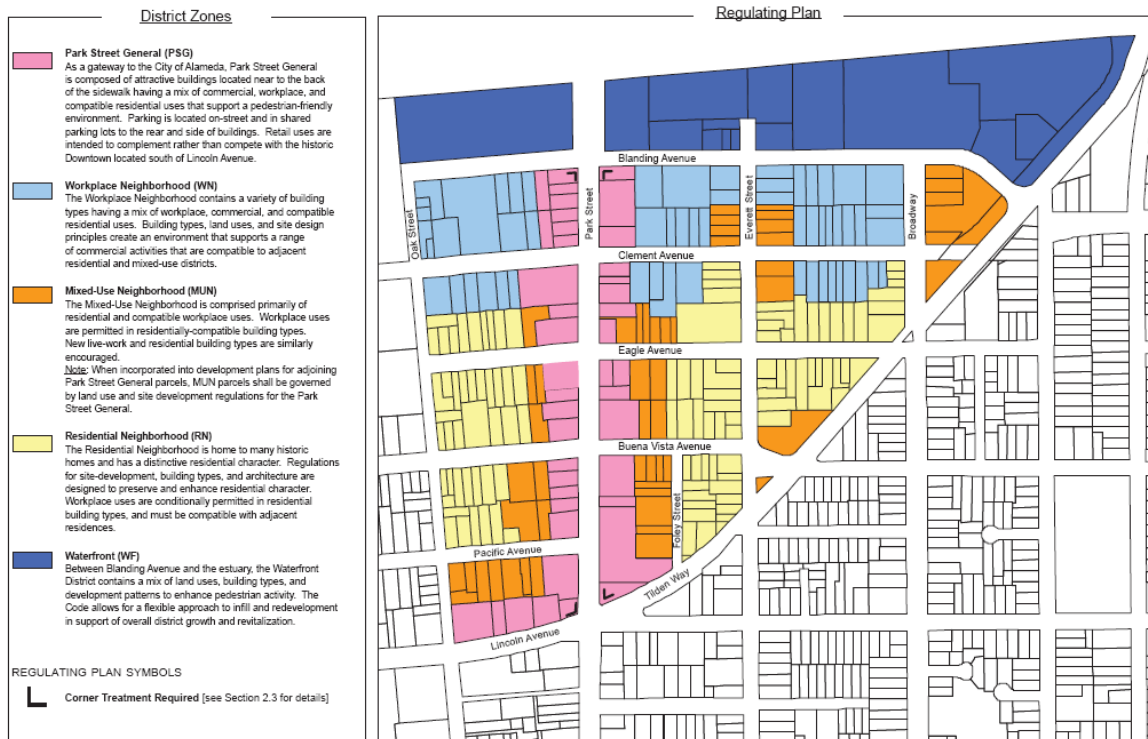
In the General Plan, the parcels in this area are currently designated for Community Commercial, Medium Density Residential, and a small area General Industry. The existing General Plan Land Use Designations for the Plan area are shown below.



In the Zoning Ordinance, the lands in the plan area are zoned for R-5 and R-4 residential uses and densities, commercial-manufacturing, intermediate industrial, and general industrial. The existing Zoning Designations for the Plan area are shown below. As shown in the diagrams, many blocks within the plan area are not zoned in conformance with the General Plan.



The Proposed North Park Street Zoning Designations for the Plan area are shown below:



#### d. Existing Land Uses in the Project Vicinity

Existing uses east of the North Park Street area include primarily residential use. To the south of the plan area, Park Street commercial uses and civic uses are the predominate land use. To the west, the plan area is bordered by residential and light manufacturing and warehouse uses.

#### e. Existing General Plan.

The City of Alameda General Plan currently includes policies that guide the development of the North Park Street Code area:

##### *Land Use Element*

- 2.4.c. Where a suitable residential environment can be created, give priority to housing on land to be developed or redeveloped in order to meet the quantified objectives of the Housing Element.
- 2.4e Expand housing opportunities for households in all income groups.

- 2.5.a Provide enough retail business and services space to enable Alameda to realize its full retail sales potential and provide Alameda residents with the full range of retail business and services.

*Many Alameda residents travel to neighboring jurisdictions to find the retail and businesses services they need. This results in a loss of retail sales tax to other cities that is needed to fund City of Alameda services and facilities, such as police, fire, and recreational services, and it results in additional traffic at the City's limited number of Estuary crossings.*

- 2.5.b Revitalize Alameda's historic Main Street business districts on Park Street and Webster Street while maintaining their small-city scale and character.

*The Main Street Business Districts on Park Street and Webster Street provide the primary concentration of specialty shops and a wide range of retail sales, services and entertainment uses to meet community-wide market demands. These districts are pedestrian-oriented districts with historical patterns of development that limit building form and limit the ability of individual businesses to provide off-street parking. The work of the Alameda Main Street Project is evident in both districts. The Park Street Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places.*

- 2.5.c Continue to support and promote Park Street as Alameda's downtown, the entertainment, cultural, social and civic center of the City, by providing a wide variety of commercial, retail, cultural, professional and governmental services.

- 2.5.h Consider amendments to the Municipal Code to encourage mixed use development including retention and addition of housing, childcare centers, and community meeting rooms and services in retail areas.

*Housing provided above retail space or on the rear half of parcels can add patrons and expand housing opportunities, provided tenants accept an environment in which commerce has priority. The Business and Waterfront Improvement Project can provide actions and financing to facilitate affordable housing where appropriate in commercial districts.*

- 2.5.k Pursue and encourage new retail development that is consistent with the retail policies of the General Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan; primarily serves the community or addresses a high priority local retail or service need; and will not have a significant long term deleterious effects on existing retail areas and/or the local economy.

- 2.5.l New commercial/retail development along the waterfront should be consistent with best practices for waterfront-oriented development including providing waterfront public access, attractive architectural elevations facing the street and the water, and where possible, uses that will activate the waterfront and support public access to the waterfront.

- 2.5.n To maintain the historic urban form and character of Park Street and Webster Street business districts, limit building heights on Park Street and Webster Street to three stories above grade, measuring 35 to 40 feet, depending on roof configuration. Parking structures are to be limited by height only, regardless of the number of parking levels.

*See Policy 3.4.d and 3.3.b in the City Design Element. Current zoning (1990) permits 100-foot buildings inconsistent with small-city character in some areas. Zoning text revisions should be written to avoid nonconforming status for the small number of existing buildings that would not conform to the new height limit.*

- 2.5.u Require that new retail projects be pedestrian-oriented and designed in a manner that is architecturally, aesthetically, and operationally harmonious with the community and surrounding development. Retail developments should include:
1. Wide sidewalks on both sides of the street and other improvements to accommodate pedestrian traffic and promote strolling, window-shopping and sidewalk dining.
  2. Clearly marked and well-designed pedestrian paths and sidewalks with enhanced crosswalk paving and a minimum number of curb cuts.
  3. Well designed parking pods that allow for internal automobile circulation with a minimum of pedestrian automobile interface.
  4. Major new internal roads which serve as major public spaces and organizing features of the development should be dedicated public roads maintained by the project with sidewalks on both sides and a minimum number of curb cuts.
  5. Large-growing trees maintained in a manner that preserves and promotes natural form to shade parking and pedestrian areas.
  6. Street trees, Bay Friendly landscaping, pedestrian scaled street lighting, and street furniture, such as benches, trash receptacles, planters, newspaper vending machines, kiosks, and bus shelters.
  7. Facilities for bicyclists and transit users, such as bike lockers and racks, bus transit centers and turnouts.
  8. Well-designed public signage including street signs, directional signs, gateway markers, street banners, and pedestrian-oriented directories.
  9. Varied building facades that are well articulated, visually appealing at the pedestrian scale, and architecture that is site-specific and incorporates design themes and features that reflect Alameda's unique character and history.
  10. New streets should generally provide on-street parking and provide for a 150 to 400 foot long block similar to the typical block lengths on Park Street and Webster Street. In some locations with minimum thru traffic, on-street parking may be removed if desired to improve or increase the pedestrian realm.
  11. Utility boxes and trash enclosures should be screened from public view and should not be located adjacent to the public right of way unless no other location is feasible or possible.
- 2.5.v Projects within the Main Street Business Districts and in the Neighborhood Business Districts should be designed with attractive street frontages that are pleasant for pedestrians with entrances and storefront windows directly on the street, wherever possible. Parking should not be located between the buildings and the public street. Parking should be located behind the buildings. Locating parking adjacent to the building and adjacent to the street should be avoided, unless not other option is available.

*Housing Element*

Policy 2.a.v            Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods by protecting and enhancing the historic architecture and ensuring that new development respects the density and physical character of the neighborhood.

Policy 2.a.vii           Encourage work/live opportunities as a way to reduce the traffic impacts of housing, to provide affordable housing opportunities, and to stimulate business incubators.

Policy 2.a.viii           Encourage mixed-use residential development in existing commercial areas.

*Open Space and Conservation Element*

Policy 5.5e            Minimize commuting by balancing jobs and nearby housing opportunities.

*Parks and Recreation Element*

Policy 6.2a            Maximize visual and physical access to the shoreline and to open water.

Policy 6.2d            Through design review of shoreline property, give consideration to views from the water.

**f.        San Francisco Bay Plan**

The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) protects and guides the use of land within 100 feet of the mean high tide line of the Bay, including the Oakland Estuary. BCDC's Bay Plan contains policies protecting the Bay's economic and natural resources, and establishes land use priorities for the shoreline zone. The policies that advance these priorities serve as the region-wide land use designations for the San Francisco Bay shoreline and guide permit decisions by BCDC.

*San Francisco Bay Plan* policies that may apply to the bayfront property of the North Park Street Code area and helped guide the development of the North Park Street Code include:

- New shoreline parks, beaches, marinas, fishing piers, scenic drives, and hiking or bicycling pathways should be provided in many areas. Highest priority should be given to recreation development in these areas.
- Shoreline projects should be designed and constructed in a manner that reduces soil erosion and protects the Bay from increased sedimentation through the use of appropriate erosion control practices.
- To prevent damage from flooding, structures on fill or near shorelines should have adequate flood protection including consideration of future relative sea level rise as determined by competent engineers.
- Water-oriented facilities such as marinas, launch ramps, beaches, and fishing piers should be provided. For parks, it is assumed that the largest possible portion of the total regional requirement should be provided adjacent to the Bay.

- The commission should allow additional marinas, boat-launching lanes, and fishing piers elsewhere on the Bay, provided that they would not preempt land or water areas needed for other priority uses and provided they would be feasible from an engineering viewpoint, would not have significant adverse effects on water quality and circulation, would not result in inadequate flushing, would not destroy valuable marshes or mudflats, and would not harm identified valuable fish and wildlife resources.
- All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay.
- Wherever waterfront areas are used for housing:
  - the amount of shoreline and the surface area of the Bay should be increased to the maximum extent feasible by dredging additional channels inland from the Bay;
  - and wherever feasible, high densities should be encouraged to provide the advantages of waterfront housing to large numbers of people.
- Water-oriented commercial/recreational uses, such as restaurants, specialty shops, theaters, and amusements, should be encouraged in urban areas adjacent to the Bay.

In addition to the public access to the Bay provided by waterfront parks, beaches, marinas, and fishing piers, maximum feasible waterfront access should be provided for every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline, except in cases where public access is clearly inconsistent because of public safety considerations or significant use conflicts. In these cases, access at other locations, preferably near the new development, should be provided whenever feasible.

## **2. IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

### **a. Significance Criteria**

The following criteria are set forth in the CEQA Guidelines as the basis for identifying whether a project would cause a significant land use impact. These criteria are stated as follows:

Implementation of the North Park Street Regulating Code would cause a potentially significant land use impact if it would:

- Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community;
- Be incompatible with existing land use in the vicinity;
- Conflict with any applicable land use plans or policies adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over the project; or,
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

**b. Less-than-Significant Impacts**

**(1) Compatible Land Uses with the Established Community**

Implementation of the North Park Street Code would not disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of the established community. The North Park Street Code would change the zoning designation of several properties and would facilitate redevelopment of existing developed sites. The proposed changes would support the transition of the area from an auto-oriented, industrial, residential mix to a mix of compatible commercial, residential and service uses. Under the new code, many legal non-conforming residential structures would become legal conforming land uses.

The North Park Street Code would also maintain and extend the City's traditional grid street pattern and provide a network of bike and pedestrian pathways, allowing residents in neighborhoods in the vicinity of the North Park Street Code area easy access to the waterfront. By allowing for land uses that promote a pedestrian friendly mixed use environment and a circulation system that connects outer residential districts to the waterfront, the North Park Street Code would enhance the physical arrangement the of Northern Waterfront and would provide for the development of compatible land uses typical of a viable urban environment. The North Park Street Code would have a generally **beneficial impact** on the area.

**(2) Compatibility with the Alameda General Plan**

The North Park Street Code implements, and is consistent with, the City of Alameda General Plan.

**(3) Compatibility with the BCDC Plan**

The proposed North Park Street Code would have no adverse impacts on the shoreline vis-à-vis the policies of BCDC's San Francisco Bay Plan. Implementation of the North Park Street Code would actually allow better and easier public access to the shoreline, through the transformation of current industrial land uses that limit recreational uses along the shore, to land uses that would facilitate and encourage public access to the shoreline. Therefore, implementation of the North Park Street Code would be consistent with the BCDC Plan and policies and would generate beneficial land use impacts. All future projects adjacent to the water will require BCDC review and approval.

**c. Significant Impacts**

There would be no significant land use impacts as a result of the adoption and implementation of the North Park Street Code.